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NSC BRIEFING

5 Oct

1954

CHINESE OFFSHORE ISLANDS

I. Although shelling of Quemoy's less than 100 rounds per day since 22 September, Communist artillery reported being relocated and resupplied and heavy shelling may be resumed at any time.

reports say "very large" tanks moving through Foochow toward Amoy in mid-September.

B. Possible use of Communist air at Quemoy--unconfirmed--

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PACOM review(s) completed.

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C.

unconfirmed--Communist troops  
concentrating in Amoy area, use  
of 20 motorized junks in landing  
exercises.

D.

and Communist radio have announced  
islands will be in Communist hands  
by 15 October.

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E. As result these developments,  
Nationalist Defense Ministry and  
MAAG observers believe assault  
on some of Quemoy a "distinct  
possibility" at any time.

II. Nationalists have reinforced Quemoy  
garrison. Arrival 60 light tanks  
2 October brings total to 98, plus  
12 75mm assault guns.

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Quemoy garrison now some 53,500  
regulars, plus some 1,350  
guerrillas. Nationalist artillery  
totals: 52 75mm howitzers  
(4 battalions plus); 77 105mm  
howitzers (6 battalions plus);  
5 155mm guns (1 battery plus);  
12 155mm howitzers (1 battalion)  
and 12 40mm AA guns (2 batteries)

III. Near the Matsus, Communist activity  
continues. On 27 September, 1,000  
junks and two larger vessels were  
spotted opposite the islands.

A. This large shipping concentration  
very probably explained by run  
of "yellow fish"--a Chinese  
delicacy--in coastal waters.

B. On Sept 200 of these junks  
approached Matsus but were few  
when nationalists fired shells.

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Incident apparently source of  
Formosa press claim that Communist  
"invasion" was repelled.

- C. Just such fishing, however, could  
provide natural cover for surprise  
assault on Matsus: so long as junks  
concentrated, threat remains.

D.



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IV. Matsu garrison (5,000 regulars, perhaps  
2,400 guerrillas) is alert to possibility  
of attack.

A. However,

fortifications scanty and defense  
plans "not impressive."

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V. Communist activity in Tachen area is marked by increasing air patrols along coast from Ningpo and over islands.

A.



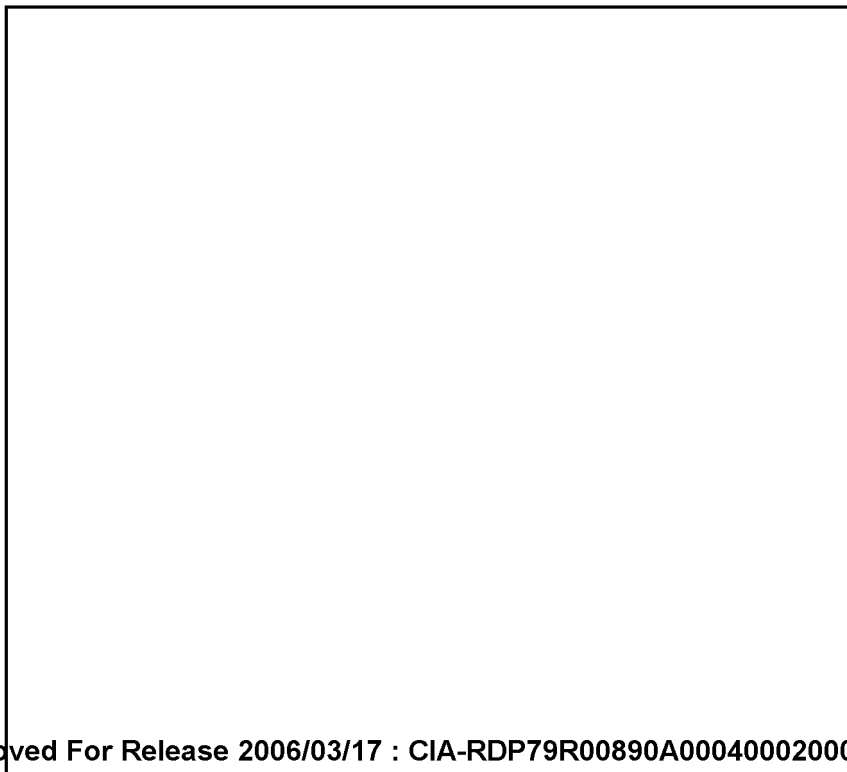
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Seldom

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attack ground targets, but have strafed Nationalist naval vessels in harbor.



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D. [REDACTED]

many Communist naval vessels now concentrating in Choushans, one of chief Communist naval bases. Attack on Tachens would probably come either from Choushans, where the Chinese Communist 22nd Army (50,000 troops) is located: or from Haimen, where 20th Army located and shipping concentration reported fortnight ago.

E. [REDACTED]

Yangtze estuary closed to non-military shipping and, on 30 Sept., patrolled by Soviet vessels. No confirmation yet from Hong Kong shipping circles, which would be first to know.

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VI. Nationalist opinion divided on relative threat to different islands.

A.



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B.

C. In view Communist coastal strength, none of islands appear safe from attack; all could conceivably be assaulted simultaneously.

D. "Cheapest" operation would be against Matsus. Capture of Quemoy would be costliest venture, but highest in prestige value. "Liquidation" of Tachens probably represents middle balance between cost and prestige.

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